WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

VOL. VI.] JUNE, 1890. [No. 6.

GROWTH IN KNOWLEDGE.

Our position in respect to this magazine from the first has been, that we would not suffer it to be so tied to any party or school of thought in the Church, as to prevent its growth along the lines of truth upon which it was started. The danger in such efforts has always been that, from the dread of isolation and the necessities of support, those who start out in this way fall back from the high ground of free investigation, and become the organs of some party or the exponents of some fixed ideas, beyond which they are afraid to advance. On the other hand, we know well the danger of irresponsible freedom. No true servant of God, however, can ever feel that he is irresponsible in the exercise of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. He is responsible to God, and no less so to his brethren than if they held over him an ecclesiastical rod. For no man can love God unless he love his brethren also, nor can he serve Him except as he seeks the highest welfare of his brethren. But, under a sense of this obligation, we have felt that we could not allow ourselves to be hampered in the search for whatever new truth the

Word of God may contain, or the Spirit of God may bring to light from any quarter, bearing upon the great question of man's future and how he is to prepare for it. It is because of this that the readers of this magazine, from the outset of its career, will have noticed progress at various points in its teachings. While holding fast to the primary principle of the redemptive character of resurrection, we have grown into wider views of the nature and the time of resurrection. We see that it is a process, which may have its beginning in this life, and not merely an event of the life to come. While it must bring blessing to all the subjects of it—even the unjust—we think we see more clearly than formerly the relation of this truth to the Scripture teaching concerning the destruction of the ungodly.

As nothing can abide forever which has not in it the divine elements of goodness and truth, so in the reconstruction of wicked men through the process of death and resurrection, their personal continuity can inhere only in these permanent qualities. All else must be destroyed. So far, therefore, as by a vicious life they have sunk themselves in sin and identified their personality with their evil nature, so far, in the destruction of that nature, their individuality must go with it. It is in this way that the process of resurrection becomes to the unjust a process of judgment. And in this way all the results of good conduct and character are preserved and rewarded. Nothing has helped us more at this point than the discovery that the saint-class of Scripture is distinct from that of the just, who are promised "the resurrection of life." The saints are even here "risen with Christ." "The just" are the

righteous and humane of every nation, who, under the culture of their religious systems, have developed in greater or less degrees these qualities of goodness. Such have the qualities which will give them a more or less favorable standing in the life to come. They are not "saints." They are not prepared for God's presence. But they enter upon the path of life that leads to it. And this classification of mankind into just and unjust cannot be according to hard and fast lines, which leave no room for variety in each class. The Scripture use of the term "just" is broader than all this. And in the great mass of men the two qualities of justice and iniquity coexist in varying equilibrium. But it is easy to see in the light of this principle, which consigns to destruction the whole of man's evil nature—the old Adam—how the being of a man sunk in sin may be so stripped by death, as to leave little or nothing of the former self to emerge in resurrection. The man has "lost himself and is cast away." And yet the divine essence around which the man was originally built up, and which is imperishable, must be preserved, and build for itself through resurrection another habitation. How infinitely important, from this point of view, is the kind of material which is being wrought by us into the fabric of this present life! Verily, whatsoever a man soweth that must he also reap. He that soweth to his flesh must, of the flesh, reap corruption. He that soweth to the Spirit, shall, of the Spirit, reap life everlasting.

UNSETTLED QUESTIONS.

It is surprising how many important questions are now being agitated in the Church, demanding settlement. These questions were apparently settled in the past, but the old foundations are no longer strong enough to bear the systems reared upon them, and hence a new basis must be sought. The old doctrine of verbal inspiration has to be re-examined, and adjusted to the fact of a fallible human element in the channel through which the message has been transmitted to us. The function of the Church as the channel of grace to men and as the depositary of that divine force which is to save society and regenerate the world is still in dispute. We have recently seen the remark attributed to Dr. Phillips Brooks, that the great use of ordinances and symbols and sacraments in the Church is, to educate men up to that point where they would no longer need them. An advanced class of Christians claim that they have already reached that point. The Christian Scientists dispense with the old vesture of both dogma and ritual, and pretend to lead us into the very arcana of the truth without their help. And out of this mass of opinions there is all the time emerging the old questions of Church union and the proper form of the Church, and the still more practical question of how she shall grapple with the evils of present social and commercial systems, and bring on that era of human brotherhood which must some day be attained, if God be the Father of us all.

But behind all these problems, as we have maintained,

there lies this primary question: What is the purpose of God in the creation of mankind, and to what goal is He leading it? Now to this question the design of God in raising up man to a future life beyond the grave is directly related. The primary fact in Christianity is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Did that great event open up to man the path to immortality, or was he created immortal? And is the opportunity to rise into this life immortal limited for all men to the opportunities of this present life? If this be so, to what end has God provided that the mass of mankind shall be raised? Is this recovery an untold curse, or does it bring blessing proportionate to character? and must not this renewal of life renew also the opportunities of life? The whole doctrine of the Church, the purpose of her calling, her relation to the rest of mankind out of which she is an election, her attitude toward, and her message to, her fellow-men, are all governed by this primary question of the future. Every question in theology is more or less affected by it. To settle these questions, therefore, the Church must begin at this beginning and settle this prime question in eschatology. She must know to what end God has called this human race into being, and what are His methods, and what the scope, of that education by which He is training this race for its destiny. Then the true calling of the Church and her position and duties in this present world will emerge to view. The doctrine of the resurrection can only be brought out in its true light in this way, and as this is the foundation fact in the Christian scheme, the whole system of truth built upon it must take shape and coloring from the view taken of this first principle of the faith.

RESURRECTION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

There are many wise men in our day, even in orthodox Churches, who tell us that there are few, if any, allusions in the Old Testament to resurrection and a future life. When, however, the knowledge of the principle that resurrection is redemptive is attained, it is surprising how this light breaks out on the Old Testament pages, and it is seen that this is the thing about which God has been speaking by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Let us take, for example, a passage—one of a numerous class—from one of these prophets. We select Isaiah xlix, 5–10, R. V.:

"And now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, and that Israel be gathered unto him (for I am honorable in the eyes of the Lord, and my God is become my strength): yea, he saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth. . . . In an acceptable time have I answered thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to raise up the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritages; saying to them that are bound, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and on all bare heights shall be their pasture. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them."

No doubt the Deliverer here is God's Messianic Servant. And the common interpretation of this description of His

work is, that it refers to His rescue of a remnant of Israel and of a multitude also of the Gentiles from spiritual bondage. This is the darkness and shadow of death out of which He bids them "Go forth."

No doubt this spiritual deliverance is here in view. But is this all that is contemplated? Does not spiritual death place its victims in captivity to actual death? And was not this the condition of the great mass of Israel's generations, that they had gone down into this land of darkness apparently beyond help or hope, except as the God of Israel might interfere as their Redeemer? A careful scrutiny of the Hebrew words here translated "them that are bound" and "in darkness," shows that they are frequently employed to designate this very captivity in Sheol (see Gesenius *sub voce*). The "preserved of Israel" also are those who are guarded in the earth's hidden places. The word *choshek*—darkness—is the Hebrew parallel for sheol in Job. x, 21, xvii, 13, Eccles. xi, 8, etc. In Isa. xlii, 7, xlvii, 5, and in this passage, it denotes a subterranean prison. The reference in the whole passage is to a deliverance which should reach the generations of Israel's dead, and flow over from them to the Gentiles also, the vast bulk of whom had gone down into this darkness. From this point of view the quotation of verse 10, by St. John in Revelation vii, 16, and his application of the beautiful words "They shall hunger no more," etc., to those who stand before the throne, redeemed from death, are natural and pertinent. The aged Simeon in the *Nunc Dimittis* quotes directly from this prophecy. Are we to suppose that when he took the infant Jesus in his arms and confessed Him to be the Messiah long waited for—

God's promised salvation—that he looked forward merely to the conversion of a meagre handful of the Jews, while the bulk of the nation were to go on dying in their sins, and that this light to lighten the Gentiles would shine only upon a fragment of the living nations of mankind, and show no wonders to their dead? Not so did the prophets and saints in whom God's Spirit dwelt interpret the message. Their views of the Messiah's conquering power were bounded by no such narrow limits. The very marrow of His triumph was to be His storming of the gates of sheol and of death and the deliverance of their multitudes of captives. Nothing short of this would confirm the promises made to the fathers or vindicate the honor of Jehovah, who had made Israel's cause His own, and who was the God of the Gentiles also. In the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses of this same chapter the promise is repeated in a form that can mean nothing less than their rescue from this most powerful of their enemies —death : "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captives be delivered? But thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered : for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children . . . and all flesh shall know that I, the Lord, am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

THE man who sets out to explain the Scriptures, and who ignores or denies the principle that resurrection is redemptive, is like a sailor putting out to sea without compass or chart.

THE PRESBYTERIAN DISCUSSION.

It is evident that the Presbyterian Church has entered upon one of the most important and prolonged discussions in the history of the Church. Two-thirds of the Presbyteries are in favor of revision. Most of these have persuaded themselves that this work can be satisfactorily accomplished by a few surface changes. But, as Professor Briggs well remarks in a recent article in the *Independent*, this discussion has now gone so far that the Church will be compelled to choose between the distinct avowal or repudiation of these five points:—1, Reprobation; 2, the Damnation of Infants; 3, the universal damnation of the heathen; 4, the statement that Roman Catholics are idolators; and 5, that the Pope is Antichrist. He says also, that back of the present first line of the revision army another line is advancing that will demand a still greater revision, and they will get it, so sure as the work of revision by amendment begins. He thinks that any committee who may undertake the work of adapting the old Confession to the present need "without impairing the integrity of the system" will enter upon a hopeless task. He would therefore recast the whole.

We have all along believed that the vital question underlying this agitation, and which has thus far been concealed, relates to the point we raised when we moved in this matter five years ago. It is the scope and extent of God's great work in redemption that is in dispute, and especially whether it contains any provision for the masses of the dead who, in this life, failed to lay hold on eternal

life. To deny that it does is to be blind to the true meaning of the prime fact upon which the Christian system rests—the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The prime, fundamental, vital defect in Westminster theology is its virtual denial of any hope toward God for the race at large in His provision to raise the dead. Through a false exegesis of such crucial passages as Mark ix, 43–49, Matthew xxv, 31–46, its conception of the resurrection of the unjust is, that it is for the purpose of judging their case, which it admits is already settled, and of inflicting a sentence already suffered ;—only the body, once destroyed, is raised up to be reunited with the soul already in torment, in order that both may "be punished with unspeakable torments in hell-fire forever."

We rejoice to believe that the Spirit of God, who has stirred up this agitation, will not let it rest until the Presbyterian Church has cleared its creed of this foul aspersion of the grace of God and this entire subversion of the gospel. To the fair and honest meeting of this issue it must come at last. All its temporary skirmishing only makes it more sure that it will be brought sooner or later face to face with this citadel of error, entrenched in the very heart of its system.

BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD.

The *Old Testament Student*, for April, thus refers to a recent unique attempt in the March number of the *Expositor* to interpret I Cor. xv, 29 ;

The writer calls attention to the probability of the cus-

tom in the earlier days of Christianity by which the baptism of the *head* of a household entailed that of the family. But in many families there were, doubtless, vacant places made by the death of loved ones. Where were they? Would this baptism of the living separate them from the unbaptized dead? If some were scrupulous on this point and hesitated to accept Christianity on this account, the idea of the family, as composed of living and dead, would be likely to call out some custom such as this of the vicarious baptism of living persons in behalf of dead ones. It is thought to be quite conceivable, then, that the "dead" of whom Paul speaks as receiving the benefits of the baptism of others, were none other than the departed members of the family newly received into the Christian faith.

The editor of the *Student* remarks that this idea has little to support it, and that this new interpretation will probably take its place in the limbo of exploded theories concerning this vexed passage.

The obscurity in this passage which so baffles the experts is due either to the fact that they cannot make it fit in to their preconceived theories, or they are afraid to face the fact, which it plainly teaches, that the condition of the dead is not so immovably fixed, but that the self-sacrifice of the living may inure to their benefit. The writer in the *Expositor* has a glimpse of this, and applies, very justly, the principle to the case of families. His view of its application, however, is too limited, and it is narrowed by his view of the baptism referred to, as being the ritual act. It is true the act is mentioned, but the context shows that the apostle has chiefly in mind that baptism into the death of Christ which the rite signifies. He is speaking of his hourly jeopardy and daily dying—his constant self-

surrender to death, which is the true baptism with Christ; and the question, "Why are they then baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?" relates plainly to the fact, that the dangers and sacrifices which Christians were called upon to make had some relation to the recovery from death of those already dead, and would bring them benefit. The Greek preposition means "in behalf of," and if Scripture readers would give up their prepossessions and take these words in their plain sense, there would be no difficulty. Theology has so long obscured for us the proper meaning of this crowning fact of Christianity—the resurrection of the dead—denying to it all redemptive and benign effects, except in the case of elect saints, that most Christians seem hopelessly blinded to it as a "hope toward God" for the kindreds and families of mankind. And the place of the elect, as the ordained channels of this blessing for the race, is utterly ignored.

EXTRACTS.

We are by no means prepared to indorse the singular views contained in the book put forth by Laurence Oliphant, called *Scientific Religion*, but we found in reading it—what we do not often meet with in more orthodox books—glimpses of the same truth concerning man's nature and destiny to which our own studies have conducted us.

First, as to the nature of the soul, we have taught that the *pysche* of Scripture—the soul—is to be distinguished from the *pneuma*, or spirit, in that it is its embodiment or vesture, as the outward body is the vesture of the soul. And so we read here:

The psyche is, in fact, a body differing only from ours in the composition of the atoms of which it consists, but otherwise exactly resembling ours in its physical construction. We call it the soul, but it is not less a body, of which our outer body is the outer shell or covering.

Second, we have believed it to be probable that the destruction with which wicked men are threatened in Scripture is such a dissolution of the elements of their being as carries with it a graduated loss of personal identity, proportionate to evil character; they lose themselves. This excludes, on the one hand, the idea of their eternal conscious suffering, and, on the other, leaves room for whatever gracious operation becomes possible in their case through a resurrection from the dead. Similar ideas are here met with:

Those who do not work out their own happiness by constant endeavor for the happiness of others, but fall under the delusion that it could be worked out for its own sake, and at the sacrifice of the happiness of others, continue in this delusion until the vices which it propagates produce atomic forces which, after causing excruciating suffering, not unmixed with insane delights, finally neutralize each other; but as the divine life-principle in them still exists, it reconstitutes them under entirely new and pure conditions, the only loss being that of conscious continuity of existence on the part of the individual whose moral, intellectual, and physical nature they composed.

Among the people who can really be said to die, because they finally lose continuity of individual consciousness, are those also who live in a selfish desire for immortality, and in the delusion that their own happiness here and hereafter is the one end and aim of existence. But those who are willing to die that they may save others—who have no

thought of their own safety or happiness here or hereafter, provided only they can win happiness for their fellows—they are immortal on this earth; and though they may shuffle off what is called their mortal coil, will never really die, or lose their own individuality, but progress eternally in the joys of service.

Third, we have insisted that the Scripture doctrine of redemption cannot be understood, unless we recognize the solidarity of the human race, and the fact that it is bound together by such organic ties that the triumph of an elect class over sin and death may bring blessing to their human brethren, both living and dead. Whether the form in which Mr. Oliphant presents this idea be correct or not, the idea itself frequently recurs.

Those, on the other hand, who rise, are perpetually increasing in beauty of expression, as their virtues shine from their countenances, and their organisms become refined and purified of all earthly taint by incessant labor for others. These others are not only those whom they left behind on earth, but those in the invisible world who have not yet sunk into irreclaimable depths of vicious self-gratification and who are painfully and laboriously lifted, by angelic effort, out of regions in which they find alike their misery and their insane delight. There is a point, however, where their insanities become so confirmed that these efforts are of no avail; where memory fails and all continuity of individuality is lost. But the divine spark still burns in them—as it does in everything—and their atoms will finally undergo a transformation corresponding to death, by which that spark will be liberated, and the atoms will recombine around it under new and altered conditions.

Mr. Oliphant, whose views at these points are an advance upon those of Swedenborg, all through his

book carries us into new and strange regions where few are willing to follow him. And yet high-soaring and erratic souls, like his, especially if they be unselfish and sincere as was his, often open doors into regions of truth concealed from most of us, and into which we may profitably enter, provided we carry with us the sure lamp of God's Word. It is a pleasing thought that, whatever may have been his vagaries of religious thought, on his death-bed he was constantly humming and singing "Safe in the arms of Jesus," and that he died in firm faith in the one only Name by which we must be saved.

PERSONAL IDENTITY.

The London *Spectator* calls attention to a report in the *Times* of a recent lecture on this subject, delivered by the Hon. Geo. G. Stokes, M. P., President of the Royal Society. Professor Stokes contributes one of the most thoughtful articles of the series in "That Unknown Country," in which he takes the ground, which is substantially our own, that man is not inherently immortal, but becomes so through redemption and resurrection. In the lecture referred to he refutes, first, the materialistic hypothesis which makes self-consciousness a blossom of the material organization, and, second, the psychic hypothesis which makes the material organization only a sort of prison-house for the free indwelling spirit. Professor Stokes believes that man is a complex being, made up of body and soul, and that both of these are essential to his

existence as a man, but he finds that the principle of his individuality lies deeper than either the material or the psychic elements that enter into his organism. He believes in—

"A sort of energy lying deeper down than even the manifestation of life, on which the identity of man, and his existence and the continuance of his existence depended. Such a supposition as this was free from the difficulties of the two theories he had brought before them, the materialistic theory, and what he had called the psychic theory. It represented the action on the living body as the result of an energy, if he might say so, an energy which was individualized; and the process of life, thinking included, was the result of inter-action between this fundamental individualized energy and the organism. The supposition, that our individual being depended on something lying deeper down than even thought itself, enabled us to understand, at any rate to conceive, how our individual selves might go on in another stage of existence, notwithstanding that our present bodies were utterly destroyed and went to corruption."

Now all this may be translated into Scripture forms of thought and simplified. This primal energy which becomes individualized in man is the universal Spirit of life —God—who is building for Himself a temple in humanity. The continued existence of the personal man beyond death depends upon the continued presence in him of the Divine Spirit. Our Saviour taught that the psychic element in man's organism might become so penetrated by the Spirit as to become indestructible by death. Such a man would not "lose his soul." To the same effect His apostles taught that Christians were already risen—

passed from death unto life. This class must retain, therefore, not only personal consciousness, but the power to build up for themselves a complete organism, suited to their new environment and high destiny. And yet for all men, in due time and order, there is provided a resurrection. But it seems plain, from Professor Stokes' principles, and to us also from the drift of Scripture teaching, that the former man can be again individualized and recover personal identity, only in proportion as the "primal energy" which gave him being can find in him congenial abode. In other words, it is only as he retains the divine qualities of truth and goodness and virtue, that he retains the basis upon which individuality can be reconstituted. We do not believe any man is totally destitute of these qualities. And therefore we can understand how resurrection is possible in the case of all. But these qualities may be fearfully stunted and diminished. And hence we find, even in philosophy and science, a basis for that discrimination in resurrection by which men are divided into the two general classes of just and unjust, and which assigns to the one class a "resurrection of life," and to the other a "resurrection of judgment." This judgment must require the excision of those qualities and dispositions and accumulations in their being which the Divine Spirit cannot appropriate and must cast as stubble into the fire. So far as the better qualities have entered into and controlled the man's organism, so far his personal identity will be maintained. And even the resurrection of judgment will not leave such wholly stripped and naked. But we may well conceive that, in the case of hardened sinners, sunk in sensuality, these higher qualities may have shrunk into such feebleness that, in the

excision of the accumulated evil of such a life, its personal identity may go with it, and the Scripture sentence be thus verified, "Whose end is destruction."

Universalism.—For the shallow forms of universalism in which many find refuge from the threatened wrath of God against sin, we have no sympathy. And yet we hold to the wide reach of the divine compassion and the eternal efficacy of the provision for man's redemption. We see also that both the logic of human reason and of Scripture require the belief that God must at last be "all in all." And yet due place must be given to the constant teaching of Scripture concerning the wicked—"whose end is destruction." The reconciliation of these two sides of truth is to be found in the fact that the whole evil nature in man must be destroyed in God's consuming fire, and it is possible for evil men to so identify their personality with this evil nature that, in its destruction, personal identity will be lost. There is a divine spark in every man which must survive, and which may build up for itself a new habitation out of the ruin of the old. But the treasures and the memories of the former life are gone. We believe it to be an important principle in the continuity of being that personal identity can forever inhere only in those qualities of being which link man to God. So far, therefore, as any man possesses and exercises the divine qualities of truth and goodness and uprightness, so far he will "find himself" in the resurrection of the just. So far as these qualities are dormant or extinct in him, so far his resurrection must be one of judgment and excision, even to the point of "losing himself and being cast away" (Luke ix, 25).

ANOTHER ASPECT OF CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD.

The priesthood of Christ is one of the most precious doctrines of Scripture, and to it the Book of Hebrews is specially devoted. In the minds of most Christians, His priestly work relates to atonement for sin, to procure which He offered Himself without spot unto God. Of that aspect of His work which secures the redemption of our lives from destruction we do not now propose to treat. That He is our ransom, and that on the ground of His one perfect sacrifice we have forgiveness of sins, we fully believe. But from failure to look at another aspect of His priestly work, this redemption degenerates in the minds of superficial believers into a sort of commercial arrangement by which sinners are bought off from enduring the just consequences of their sins, and faith in this arrangement is made a substitute for that holiness of character without which no man shall see the Lord.

To correct this false view we need to know that the office of Christ is not merely to atone for the inbred sin of our human nature, but also to present that nature in offering to God. In doing this He must lay it upon God's altar to be purged in His fire, that it may ascend as a sweet savor unto Him. This priestly office He now executes in that He enters as the Divine Spirit into the life of every one who surrenders to Him as a Saviour, that He may offer that life unto God in this way of the death of the evil nature—the old man—on the altar of His consuming fire.

To be saved by Christ's mediation requires therefore the

surrender of ourselves to this divine process of purgation and sacrifice. His Spirit cannot dwell in us except as a Spirit of judgment and of burning. It must be continually searching out the evils in our lives and giving to the fire our sinful habits and tempers, our faults of character and conduct. Our whole body of sin must sooner or later be consumed in this fire of God. We may discern this priestly action of Christ in the adverse providences that bring to light these evils, in the pruning and chastening we experience, in the calamities that overtake us, in the persecutions we endure, in the diseases that burn up our bodily energies, and in the death that finally destroys them. We experience it no less in the self-discipline and the self-judgments wrought by His Spirit in us, by which we forsake and cast off our sins. In the whole progress of this self-correction, and this pruning by an unseen hand, we are really undergoing, at the hands of our High Priest, the offering of our human lives unto God, to be purged on His altar that they may ascend in true service and acceptable sacrifice before Him.

From this point of view there is an added preciousness in the Scripture statement, "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." As He stands between us and God to offer unto Him the sacrifice of our bodies, which is our reasonable service, He knows precisely what we are able to bear, and, as was the case with His servant Paul, if He cannot remove our infirmities or our trials, He gives us strength to bear them and enables us even to glory in them. And through them and out of them, He is able to save unto the

uttermost. We have therefore an High Priest most tender and strong, compassionate, merciful, and faithful. He will not spare our sins, because He knows we cannot carry with us into God's presence these blemishes. He will not suffer us to forget that *our* God is a consuming fire. But He is ever with us in the midst of the fire. It is the presence of His Spirit in us that brings this baptism of fire. It is His way of offering our humanity unto God, that it may be made a fit abode in which God shall dwell forever. So that in this whole process of surrender, and of patient subjection to the will of God, by which we are made perfect through suffering, He is with us, not only as our Mediator, but as our Almighty Friend and Brother, who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, and who gives grace to help in every time of need.

Let us then not think that we can take Christ as our atoning sacrifice to free us from the penalty of sin, unless we admit Him also into our hearts and bodies that He may present them as a living sacrifice unto God. The two things must go together. There is no divine arrangement by which we can escape the penalty of sin, except as we get rid of sin itself. We need to remember that the doctrine of the Book of Hebrews is not, that "God out of Christ" is a consuming fire, but that God *in* Christ, "*Our* God, is a consuming fire." If Christians in our day better understood the meaning of this statement, and ceased to pervert the atonement into a scheme by which men may escape the just consequences of their sins, they would not take up with such false and unworthy views of God's dealings with men in future punishment as now mar their Christian thinking and living and subvert the Gospel.

"COMMIT YOUR way to God, and stay your heart on the Eternal. Dwell here and now and ever in the true home of your waiting hearts, in the heavenly Eden of Peace. Let all earthly care be as nothing; welcome as blessings the evils of life, see in its sadness joy, and in its thorns a crown; for by them the hand of God is molding you to do work in His higher kingdom. He purifies by outward fire the inward evil; He draws the heart from a world of weariness and care, to find eternal peace and rest in Him. His love is everywhere and always around you, for He overshadows His children with His personal Presence, and breathes on them life and power. Only the dim shadow can be seen, but all is there, abiding in Him, proceeding from Him; and in endless happiness you will one day receive it all through His love. We live only for Him, we abide where He places us, we have no will but His, and He is our God forever and ever. God directs your way for His own glory, which is your highest good. He will have you live and labor for Him, not seeing the fruit of your toil; content to know that you are doing His work, that you prepare His way, and plow up the soil of the world for the seed of the future, knowing your record is on high. He makes of your weakness the throne of His mercy, the seat of His Omnipotence."—*J. F. Weir.*

THE ETERNAL GOODNESS.

O FRIENDS! with whom my feet have trod
The quiet aisles of prayer,
Glad witness to your zeal for GOD
And love of man I bear.

I trace your lines of argument;
Your logic linked and strong
I weigh as one who dreads dissent,
And fears a doubt as wrong.

But still my human hands are weak
To hold your iron creeds;
Against the words ye bid me speak
My heart within me pleads.

Who fathoms the Eternal Thought?
Who talks of scheme and plan?
The LORD is GOD! He needeth not
The poor device of man.

I walk with bare, hushed feet the ground
Ye tread with boldness shod;
I dare not fix with mete and bound
The love and power of GOD.

Ye praise His justice; even such
His pitying love I deem:
Ye seek a king; I fain would touch
The robe that hath no seam.

Ye see the curse which overbroods
A world of pain and loss;
I hear our Lord's beatitudes
And prayer upon the cross.

More than your schoolmen teach, within
Myself, alas! I know;
Too dark ye cannot paint the sin,
Too small the merit show.

I bow my forehead to the dust,
I veil mine eyes for shame,
And urge, in trembling self-distrust,
A prayer without a claim.

I see the wrong that round me lies,
I feel the guilt within;
I hear, with groan and travail cries,
The world confess its sin.

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed stake my spirit clings:
I know that GOD is good!

Not mine to look where cherubim
And seraphs may not see,
But nothing can be good in Him
Which evil is in me.

The wrong that pains my soul below
I dare not throne above:
I know not of His hate,—I know
His goodness and His love.

I dimly guess from blessings known
Of greater out of sight,
And, with the chastened Psalmist, own
His judgments too are right.

I long for household voices gone,
For vanished smiles I long,
But GOD hath led my dear ones on,
And He can do no wrong.

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak
To bear an untried pain,
The bruised reed He will not break,
But strengthen and sustain.

No offering of my own I have,
Nor works my faith to prove;
I can but give the gifts He gave,
And plead His love for love.

And so beside the silent sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

O brothers! if my faith is vain,
If hopes like these betray,
Pray for me that my feet may gain
The safe and surer way.

And thou, O Lord! by whom are seen
Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me if too close I lean
My human heart on thee!

—*John G. Whittier.*

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

WHY IS IT?—The Rev. Dr. G. B. Spaulding, of Syracuse, N. Y., in the *New York Evangelist* of May 8th, quotes the language of the two eminent Professors, Drs. Henry B. Smith and Roswell D. Hitchcock, both of whom are now deceased, in which they assert that theology is not a completed science. Says Dr. Smith: "What reformed theology has to got do, is to Christologize predestination and decrees, regeneration and sanctification, the doctrine of the Church, and *the whole of eschatology.*"

Dr. Hitchcock's words to the same effect are: "Theology proper was first represented by Athanasius. In the fifth century came anthropology. In the twelfth century Anselm's theory of justification was added. In the period of the Reformation, Luther stated the relations of God to man. *Eschatology remains, which is the study of the Church for the future.*"

This remark in reference to eschatology as the unexplored domain in theology, is a very frequent one, and it is most true. But

why is this region so dark? Why is the Church here especially bewildered? It is because her doctrine of the resurrection of the dead has been so long a perverted one. She has seen no light of hope in it for mankind at large, and has converted it into a mode by which the existence of the larger part of the race is perpetuated in endless despair. Nothing has so obscured the face of God and darkened the face of the world as this quenching out of Christianity the light of this "hope toward God that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust." All that is needed, then, for the solution of these great problems of the future is for the Church to restore this fundamental doctrine of resurrection to its rightful place in theology, and to give to it its true meaning. The whole realm of eschatology will then brighten up at once before it.

THERE is one question which we would be glad to have the authorized teachers of the Church in our day to fairly face. It is this: Do the words of Jesus in Mark ix, and Matthew xxv, and of St. Paul, in II Thessalonians i, 9, which passages are the main support of the orthodox doctrine of endless punishments, relate to a penalty to be visited upon wicked men *before* or *after* resurrection? If, as they imply upon their face, men living this present life are to be thus visited with destruction, then the whole question we have raised as to the meaning and effect of resurrection in the divine economy becomes an open one, and the general teaching of Scripture in regard to it as a "hope" must come in to aid us in determining the nature and the issue of the threatened punishment. Just here lies the key to this whole dark problem.

PROFESSOR BRIGGS ON CHURCH UNITY.—At the Annual Meeting of the Church Unity Society of Philadelphia, held May 11th, at the Church of the Incarnation, we had the pleasure of listening to Professor Charles A. Briggs, of New York, upon this subject. He certainly took the most advanced ground of any Presbyterian we have heard express himself upon it. He reviewed, historically, the causes of division in the past, and showed how, since the Reformation, certain important doctrines and principles had been

settled in this way. But he declared that the occasion and the necessity for perpetuating these divisions are now past. Division, even when overruled for good, he affirmed, was still an evil and a sin. In the providence of God we are now on the threshold of great transformations. And the Church is especially called to strive to realize her divine ideal of one body in Christ, and so to properly address itself to the great work that lies before it. Mere federation could never reach the end. True Christian unity would never be possible without organic union, which is the only union possible in a living body.

He said that the existing agitation in the Presbyterian Church was in the interest of this movement for unity, and that any denomination that erected a barrier of dogma or rite, or any kind of barrier that shut out from its communion or ministry men who were qualified by Christ, and bore His stamp, thereby became guilty of schism, and that, for his part, he should not cease his efforts until the Church to which he belonged was purged from that sin. He believed that the movement for Church union was profoundly connected with the preservation of the dearest interests of our common Christianity, and that without it, our religion would soon fail to make good its claim to be a world-religion, meant for all mankind. This movement was fast becoming the most important of all religious movements in the Church, and must soon absorb all others.

He paid a high compliment to the House of Bishops in this country, and to the Lambeth Conference for the terms in which they have set forth the essentials of unity, declaring that he could heartily assent to each one of the four propositions, excepting that for the words "historic episcopate" in the last term, he would substitute a broader term inclusive of it—"historic ministry."

As compared with the declarations of President Patton and others, that Church union is now an altogether impracticable and even an undesirable idea, such sentiments from a noted Presbyterian leader are surprising and refreshing.

In a recently-published novel—*Edward Burton*—in which existing social and religious problems are ably discussed, we meet with the following:

"There is a spark of divinity in every human being; a 'light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;' but it may fairly be questioned whether or not, in the case of the individual who leads merely a sensuous existence, the divine spark is in any degree incorporated into *his* personalty. If it be, that is life; otherwise, all is death. Death cannot signify continued life. All that is evil must die. If there be any future place, where life and evil conjointly and eternally exist, there God can never become *all-in-all*."

We clip this item from the *Independent:*

". . . A number of the bishops of the Church of England have declared, it is stated, that they do not believe in the inherent immorality of the soul. They do not believe that it is clearly taught by the Scriptures, and look upon it as a philosophical theory."

A recent Hamilton, Ontario, paper says:

"Rev. Samuel Lyle preached a remarkable sermon last night, in the Central Presbyterian Church on 'Election.' He held that election was inclusive and not exclusive, and that the elect were not only predestined to be saved, but to bless the entire human race and to be the instruments in God's hands for procuring its salvation. Mr. Lyle admitted that, viewed in the light of the Westminster Confession, his opinion was open to the charge of heresy, but said that if he was mistaken, he erred with the best and most learned men of the Church."

Presbyterian Revision.—The current discussions of this subject by ministers and elders prove conclusively that Calvinism in its supralapsarian form (that is to say, in its only consistent and logical form) is almost universally repudiated by the Presbyterian clergy; and that in its sublapsarian form it is firmly held by some, is accepted with a shudder by others, is explained away by many, is disdainfully rejected by not a few, is silently ignored by nearly all, and is openly preached by hardly any. No formal revision of formularies will change the facts or create a new thing under the sun. All that it possibly can do is to recognize and accept the fact that, as an authoritative doctrinal "standard," the Confession of Faith has become utterly obsolete.

Not to revise the Confession of Faith may have some bad results. As we have before said in another connection, there is nothing so irresistible as suppressed conviction. An earnest and entirely respectable but mistaken conservatism may insist on retaining the merely human and therefore alterable documents of Presbyterianism, in their inherited form, as standards of faith; but if it does, one of two things is absolutely certain to follow: Either the men who do not believe in the Confession will be driven out of Presbyterianism, and men like-minded will be kept out of it; or else that dry-rot of all religious conviction and moral honesty will be planted in the heart of Presbyterianism—a general understanding that solemn doctrinal definitions may be accepted by every man in the sense that best pleases himself without regard to their plain significance, and then rejected without regard to consistency or ordinary veracity. Thus Presbyterianism is confronted with the alternative which always follows excessive dogmatism.—*N. Y. Churchman.*

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

A PRESBYTERIAN minister writes:

"I wish you could have been present at some of the debates in the New York Presbytery. No one could listen there without seeing, I think, that progressive theological thought has a permanent footing in the Presbyterian Church. I was glad you published your letter to the *Evangelist*, and your position there taken is certainly sound. The present discussion does *not* go to the root of the matter, and the controversy is largely waged about doctrinal points that are no longer living issues. But eventually it will move forward, and the very question you are agitating will come to the front.

"May we not hope that God will bless to the Church all this doctrinal unrest and agitation? Surely the kingdom of God must advance along with the insertion in our creeds of the nobler and better conception of the Heavenly Father, and the discarding of those dogmas by which He has been dishonored."

FROM another Presbyterian minister:

"An opportunity came to me recently, of presenting an outline of your views before a small company of Presbyterian ministers.

Only one in his remarks was decidedly intolerant of the new heresy, speaking evidently without knowledge, beyond what was furnished by my summary presentation of the case in a tentative way, and so having nothing against it but the old staple arguments in favor of eternal punishment.

"It occurred to me to say that, 'Supposing the doctrine you advocate had been commonly received, and we had been instructed in it from childhood, should we then have any difficulty in accepting and upholding it? Then suppose the now current doctrine were advanced, new, demanding belief, would we unhesitatingly renounce our error and embrace the new?'"

We are glad that our brother put it in that way. The great obstacle to this reasonable and Scriptural view of "the hope and resurrection of the dead," of which, like Paul, we are called in question, is the prejudices and prepossessions it must first overcome. Not long since we made the inquiry of a distinguished Presbyterian why there had been so few in that Church who were disposed to meet and fairly deal with the issue we had raised in it with regard to the meaning of resurrection. His reply was, that most of their ministers would have to travel a long way before they could reach a point of view from which to fairly consider such a question.

The same correspondent says in another letter:

"I cannot but think what a grand solvent of the existing difficulties attending the question of Revision it would be, to admit the doctrine of redemptive resurrection. I wish I could help to send WORDS OF RECONCILIATION to all the ministers of our Church, and that all would give it a careful perusal. To many, I believe, it would bring surprising light. May the Lord's grace abound to you more and more."

FROM a Minister in South Dakota:

"Your April number is at hand and is brimful of good things. It seems to me that each number improves upon the last. Go on, my brother, in the name of the Lord of hosts. The future is bright with hope. Truth is mighty and must prevail, although some may fall as martyrs in its cause. May you be spared to yet see the Dagon of error fall before the victorious advance of Bible truth. I would like to aid your work, but our State is much impoverished, and our people suffering from failure of crops."

A DISTINGUISHED theological writer, specially upon the subject of Conditional Immortality, writes to us from Switzerland:

"The more I read the WORDS OF RECONCILIATION, the more I feel interested in your views. They grow upon me, and I think with you that such a wonderful and miraculous work of God as the promised resurrection of the human body must be a boon for *all*. Please accept my best Christian salutations."

A LADY subscriber, who has been for some time abroad writes:

"I have received the numbers regularly. To me they have been of inestimable value. I cannot, nor never could, feel that men were born to be miserable on this earth and suffer untold punishment hereafter. There is so much to delight in this world, of which we are given the sense of enjoyment, and which is to us a constant proof that God is Love, that there must be some such outcome to human life as the doctrine of redemptive resurrection supplies. This brings comfort with it. With the hope of your continuing your work, enlarging it, and benefiting the minds of all who read it, I am

"Most truly yours."

AN earnest friend in Brooklyn, who subscribes for several copies for distribution, sends us the following. While he writes warmly of the universal love of God, it is not because he overlooks His righteousness, and that His love must burn as a consuming fire toward all that is evil.

"I trust that God is opening up your way, so that you may be able to testify of His grace and mercy to increasing numbers.

"I thank Him for the grace He has given you to stand fast in loneliness and rejection for His Name's sake. To His name be the praise. It is grand to see the truth in harmony. *If what we believe is true there must be harmony, for the truth cannot contradict itself.* In the light of resurrection, when understood as a hope toward God for the just and the unjust (the race of man), we are capable of understanding the words of our Lord as recorded in John's Gospel, 3d chapter: 'For God sent not His Son into the world (cosmos) to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.' It avails not to say that God intended to be gracious and would be, if man would only allow Him to be so. If the favor of God hinges on the man, and if man must be improved before God can act in his behalf, this poor world would be in a very bad plight. We would have to give up all for lost. But

it is not so: 'God will make bare His holy arm in the eyes of all nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God.' This is one of the many gracious declarations of the blessed God, which we can find scattered over all the Bible. He is working according to *the eternal purpose or plan of the ages*, which he hath purposed in Christ Jesus, our Lord (Eph. iii, 11). This is so blessedly plain that I wonder to see men that are set up as teachers of the people, stumbling in confusion and error. Once see that resurrection means redemption, and blessing to all the subjects of it, and it will open up all truth, and leave no cause for stumbling. The wages of sin is death, *and the race of man* goes down into death on account of sin, each to receive according to desert; but the hour is coming when all that are in their graves will hear His voice and come forth: They that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done ill to the resurrection of judgment (*krisis*, process of trial, probation). Salvation is of God. Man is the subject, God is the author, and for this cause he sent His only begotten Son into the world. He tasted death for every man. He gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time, and He wills that all men should be saved, and yet the doctrine of election is blessedly true. Without the truth of redemptive resurrection it cannot be harmonized with the universal love of God to our race. God is an absolute sovereign. His council shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure. Blessed be His name, He is not wishing to do good to man and unable to perform it by reason of having created man so superior to Himself that he can resist Him, so that His love or power over him is of no account. He is over all God blessed forever, and all He does is in harmony with Himself, and in the end will show to an intelligent creation His manifold wisdom. He is righteous altogether, and because of this every created thing will give Him unceasing praise. It is an unspeakable mercy to be brought into harmony with God so as to see and acknowledge this now, before His righteous judgments are made manifest.

"He is now taking out a seed in union with Christ, the first ripe fruit to bless all the families of the earth, to send them forth as the saviours of the race, delivering from the prison-house of death and destruction. Nothing can be too hard for our God. He kills and He makes alive. The keys of Hades and of death are in the hand of our risen Lord. He opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens. He is not experimenting. All power is given to him of the Father, and He is giving eternal life to as many as the Father hath given Him. In the end death will be destroyed, not only dying, but the thing itself, and there shall be no more pain nor sorrow and God Himself will wipe all tears from all eyes."